

Section V. Conservation Effects Introduction

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical assistance to decision-makers to develop conservation plans that protect, maintain, and improve soil, water, air, plant, animal resources and related human considerations. A primary goal is to help each client attain a Resource Management System (RMS).

The nine steps of conservation planning emphasize that NRCS planners should respond to the needs of clients. Often this need is for more and better information about what happens when conservation systems are adopted. This section includes information about the impacts conservation practices and systems have on natural resources and human considerations. Keep in mind that the tools needed to measure and analyze conservation effects are contained in training materials and reference texts kept outside the FOTG.

The information contained in Section IV will help planners guide agricultural producers (clients) through the following phases of the NRCS 9-Step Planning Process:

- Step #1 – Identify Problems & Opportunities
- Step #4 – Analyze Resource Data
- Step #5 – Formulate Alternatives
- Step #6 – Evaluate Alternatives
- Step #7 – Make Decisions
- Step #9 – Evaluate the Plan

Section V contains the following sub-sections:

V-A. Effects for RMS Formulation. This documents conservation effects information for use in building RMS guidance documents (Section III).

V-A-1. General Effects Data – This subsection includes Conservation Practice Physical Effects (CPPE) Worksheets. The CPPE worksheets provide an indication of the actual physical effects expected to occur when an individual practice is installed.

V-A-2. Effects for Guidance Documents – This subsection includes two worksheets (Site Specific Practice Effects worksheet and Resource Management System Options worksheet) can be used in conjunction with the CPPE to aid the planning process.

V-B. Effects for Decisionmaking. This section stores information about conservation effects gathered from on-farm studies or from other sources (e.g. conservation field trials, case studies, university research. etc.).

V-B-1. Producer Experiences – Case Studies. This section documents on-farm changes caused by the adoption of conservation systems, shows "before and after" results and allows potential clients to see real world examples of what happens when they adopt conservation. This information is packaged in a case study that can be used to assist conservation efforts.

V-B-2. Other Effects Information. This subsection includes other kinds of information useful in determining the effects of implementing various conservation practices and systems. This information can include information about "before and after" conservation adoption effects that have been developed by non-NRCS sources, such as university research, computer simulations, journal articles, useful farm magazine articles, or other information showing the effects of conservation recommendations.

V-C. Procedural References includes NRCS procedural references used in the development of conservation practice physical effects worksheets and other guidance documents.